

Non-nuclear deterrence in US strategic policy

Type de contenu : Texte

Type de médiation : sans médiation

Titre(s) : Non-nuclear deterrence in US strategic policy : incentives and Limitations / by Joseph J. Valenzuela ; thesis advisor David S. Yost

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Editeur, producteur : [Ft. Belvoir] : [Defense Technical Information Center], 1992

Description matérielle : 1 vol. (VI-136 p.) ; 29 cm

Note sur les bibliographies et les index : Notes bibliogr.

Note de thèses et écrits académiques : Master's thesis Master of arts in national security affairs Monterey, Calif., Naval posgraduate school 1992

Résumé ou extrait : The thesis argues that significant incentives and sufficient means exist for the United States to further develop advanced conventional weapons to accomplish missions previously reserved for nuclear weapons on both the tactical and strategic levels of warfare. This conclusion is based on a survey of (a) apparent incentives for an increased reliance on advanced extended-range conventional weapons, (b) potential capabilities and limitations of such weapons, and (c) possible strategic implications of a greater emphasis on such weapons. Incentives examined include (a) the delegitimization of nuclear deterrence, (b) environmental, technical, and safety concerns associated with nuclear weapons, (c) the declining credibility of threats to use nuclear weapons in military operations in the more probable strategic contingencies in the foreseeable future, and (d) the more credible threat of discriminate advanced conventional weapons. Currently available weapons technology can be developed to strike a broad range of targets previously thought vulnerable only to nuclear weapons at costs competitive with nuclear arms.

Sujet - Nom commun : Stratégie de dissuasion
Guerre classique

Sujet - Nom géographique : États-Unis -- Politique militaire

Forme, genre ou caractéristiques physiques : Thèses et écrits académiques